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EPISCOPAL MINISTRY AT LINCOLN UNIVERSITY

Episcopal ministry at Lincoln University proceeds, at the moment, from two different sources: St. Christopher's Church in Oxford, and the Campus Minister for Cheyney and Lincoln, functioning under U.M.H.E., who comes to Lincoln once a week. The split character of this ministry, despite the Christian dedication of those individuals who constitute the link between the two halves, has several disadvantages, not the least of which is that it underlines, and appears to acquiesce to, the racial antagonisms that beset this community. What is recommended here is that:

1. The Campus Ministry at Cheyney and Lincoln be maintained at, at least, its present budgetary level on as permanent a basis as possible.

2. That this Campus ministry be split between two people, one working at Cheyney, and one working at Lincoln in close association with St. Christopher's Mission. On the assumption that the budget remains the same, the person at Cheyney could work on a 4/5 time basis, and the person at Lincoln on a 1/5 time basis. Both should be Black.

Historical Background: At the time when this writer came to this community (1960), Episcopal ministry on the campus was split. A Black priest visited the campus once a week to minister to Episcopalian students. At the same time, an Episcopal mission was being organized at Oxford, four miles away, preparatory to building a church, St. Christopher, which was completed in 1962. The hope of many of those associated with the new mission, and the expressed desire of the Vicar, Fr. R.W. Hess, was that the new church would, among other things, contribute to more healthy

racial attitudes in the surrounding community. The mission held Sunday services at the Research Club on Locust Street, Oxford. The Research Club, be it noted, had a reputation for segregationist policies (from which it has not yet totally freed itself). The firm stand taken by Fr. Hess with the club authorities on the integrated character of these Sunday services was taken by members of the worshipping group (not all of them confirmed Episcopalians) as a significant Christian witness in the field of race relations. Oxford churches were then almost without exception segregated. The Presbyterians were divided between the First Presbyterian Church (White) and the Second Presbyterian Church (Black). (At this time, this division among Presbyterians remains, but the First Presbyterian Church now has a small number of Black members, including some senior members of the Lincoln faculty).

In the early stages after the construction of the church there were usually some Black attenders -- in very small numbers. These were usually students -- particularly from Africa or the Caribbean, less frequently American. Some faculty members occasionally attended, particularly, it would seem, because of their personal regard for the Vicar. It must be admitted that the welcome extended to Black worshippers by the congregation was of a very mixed quality. One attempt to start a choir with members of both races was defeated because some White parents would not allow their children to participate in it with one or two Black Lincoln students. St. Christopher still has no choir.

The evolution of Civil Rights into Black Power in the mid and late 1960's further strained the already very precarious racial situation at St. Christopher. To the reluctance of some White members of the congregation to welcome Blacks was added the determination of Blacks to boycott all aspects of White society, including the Church, and to dismiss as "patronizing" even well-intentioned gestures of friendship. The Corporation for Christian Work in the Colleges took this matter within

its concern. The result was the establishment, under a U.T.O. grant, of a Campus Ministry at Cheyney and Lincoln, which now functions under U.M.H.E.

U.M.H.E. Campus Ministry: The two institutions involved in the Campus Ministry, though both predominantly Black, are of a very different social and academic nature. Cheyney is a state (originally, "teachers'") college, numerically larger, academically less demanding, with a student population derived largely from the deprived sections of the Black community. It has a past history of timid acquiescence to conservative White society, and a correspondingly bitter militant opposition, which has caused serious turmoil, going as far as the forced resignation of a president in 1967-8. As a state institution, Cheyney has no chaplaincy or religious establishment in any form. Fr. Hicks, in establishing the Campus Ministry there, was literally plowing a new field and answering a very desperately felt need. There is no doubt in the mind of this writer that the job to be done at Cheyney requires the full-time or nearly full-time attention of a (Black) minister.

Lincoln University, on the other hand, is a Liberal Arts institution aiming to prepare for the professions -- among which pre-law and pre-med figure particularly prominently. Though it has many economically deprived students, it also has many children of Middle and Upper Middle Class Black families. Lincoln was founded in 1854 under the auspices of the Presbyterian Church, which maintains an interest in the college -- though the Seminary, which was a very important part of the institution since its founding, was disbanded in the 1940's. There is a Black Presbyterian chaplain,

and several faculty members are deeply committed Protestants, both White and Black. Sunday chapel services of an ecumenical Protestant character are held under the direction of the chaplain, involving student participation and frequent guest preachers (who have included, several times, Fr. Hicks). An effort is made to incorporate within the religious offering some of the Black folk sectarian religious tradition. Music at Chapel services is provided by a paid small chorale which exists in addition to the University Chorus. Both choral groups are under the direction of the Chairman of the Music Department, who happens to be an Episcopalian, but (wisely, in the opinion of this writer) chooses to assume a strictly ecumenical role in his college work. There is also a "Gospel Choir" directed by another faculty member.

While the Chaplaincy and the Sunday services are subject to the criticisms usually directed against such institutions, they seem to serve a real function, at least for that minority of students who attend. They are clearly a part of the authentic "Lincoln tradition" to which many students will probably look back with respect and nostalgia as they get older, no matter how much they may down-grade it while they are in college.

In the context of this situation, the role of a Campus Ministry functioning ecumenically under U.M.H.E. is something of an anomaly. Its validity was sharply questioned two years ago by the Chaplain, as the validity of an Episcopal ministry was not. The role which Fr. Hicks could appropriately play at Lincoln was consequently defined as that of a councillor primarily for Episcopalian students.

There are certain inherent weaknesses in this system, which are not adequately compensated for by the personal dedication of some individuals who are "making it work." Elementary logic would seem to dictate that Episcopal ministry at Lincoln shoud radiate from the nearby Episcopal Church rather than from a priest who commutes in once a week from West Chester. The fact that it does not is automatically interpreted on the campus as another proof of the "racism" of St. Christopher's Church. A priest who commutes in from a distance, furthermore, is at a great disadvantage because he cannot have close contact with the community.

On the other hand, it is unrealistic to expect that a White priest in Oxford can adequately minister to the spiritual needs of Black Episcopalian students at Lincoln. Quite aside from the question of time, he needs assistance on the part of a Black person deeply committed to the Church. The present Vicar, at the moment, enjoys some help of this kind from an unusually dedicated Black student who is also active in the U.M.H.E. program. However, one must be prepared for the fact that students graduate, and are not always replaced by others equally prepared to shoulder burdens without compensation.

In order to ensure that the Vicar of St. Christopher will have on a regular basis the assistance of a Black person (probably, though not necessarily, a student), it is proposed here that a portion of the U.M.H.E. Campus Ministry budget be allocated to the salary of someone whom we may call here, provisionally, a "Junior Campus Minister."

The Junior Campus Minister would be actively engaged in the worship of the Church, in lay reading, serving at the altar, and/or helping with the choir. On the campus, he (or she) would promote interest in the Church among students.

He (or she) would be related to the wider U.M.H.E. program, the source of salary.

Benefits to be Derived from Proposal: Quite aside from the role of helping related the Church to students, the Junior Campus Minister would act as a valuable ambassador between the younger generation of Black students and the Oxford community. There are signs that Black separatism, while very far from dead, is slightly on the wane among some. It would be of immeasurable benefit to White parishioners at St Christopher to have personal contact with young Blacks. The idea, often expressed, that people had best worship with people of their own kind because this is "comfortable" seems to represent a sectarian thinking which is the opposite of the professed convictions of the Episcopal Church. Yet, such is the pattern that has developped at St. Christopher, despite vigorous efforts by some.